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FOR
A GENERAL VIEW
OF
THE AGRICULTURAL STATE,
&c. &c.

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HINTS
FOR
A GENERAL VIEW
OF
THE AGRICULTURAL STATE
OF THE
PARISH OF SAINT JAMES,
IN
THE ISLAND OF JAMAICA.

Drawn up for the Consideration of the
BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT.

BY
NICHOLAS ROBSON,
LAND SURVEYOR OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES.

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1796.

HINTS

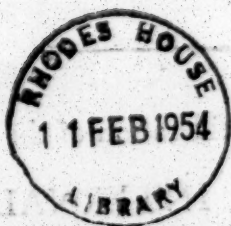
FOR

STUDENTS

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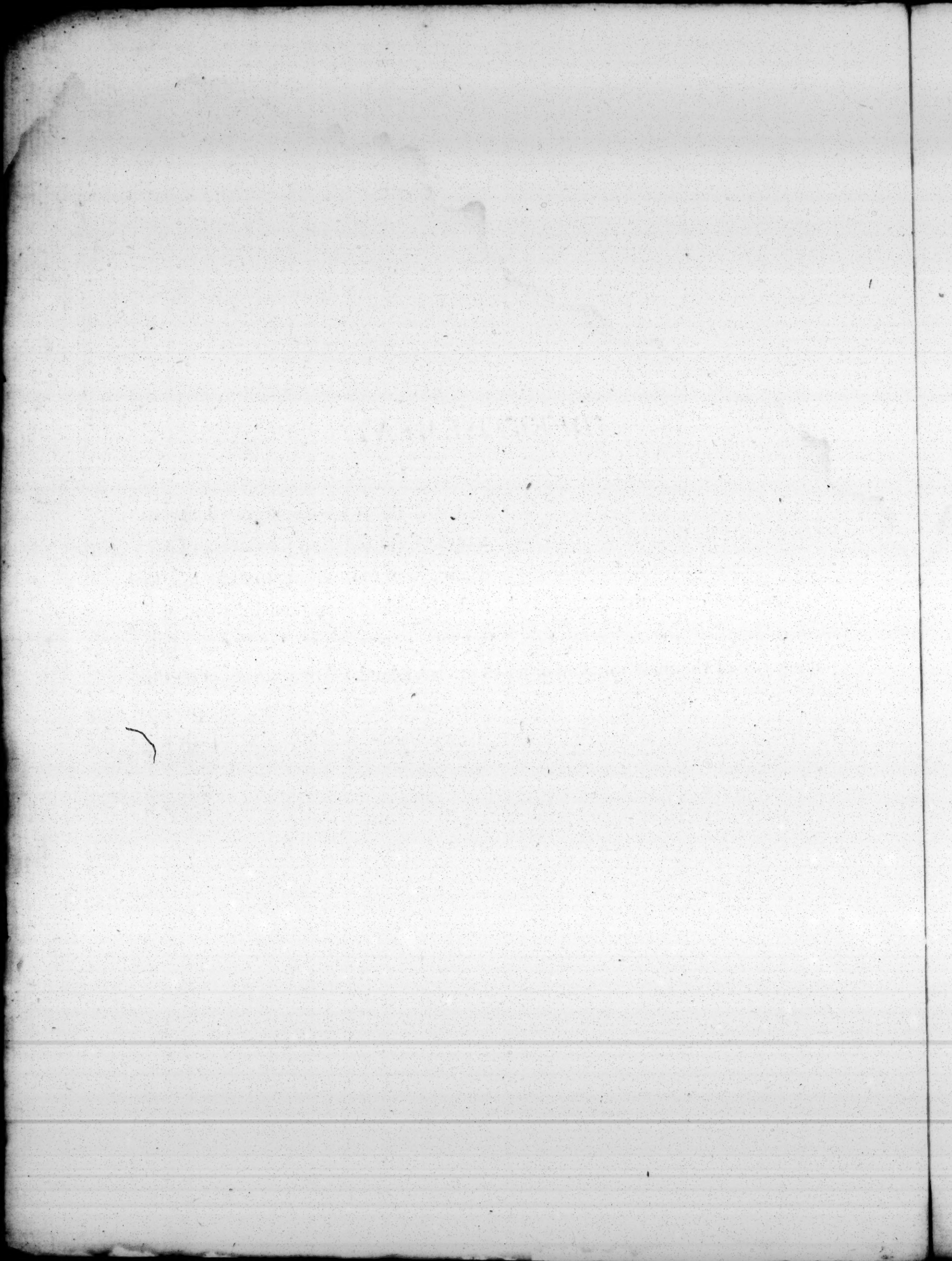
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE many important advantages which have been derived by the Public, from the Surveys of the different Counties in Great Britain, printed by the Board of Agriculture, have induced me to draw up, for the consideration of that Board, and of the Legislature and the Inhabitants at large of Jamaica, the following Hints respecting the state of the Parish of St. James, one of the most valuable districts in that Island. Any remarks upon this account, may either be transmitted to the Board of Agriculture, by persons resident in London, or to Mr. Robson, who proposes residing at Montego Bay for some time.

London, Feb. 12, 1796.



INTRODUCTION.

For Additional Observations.

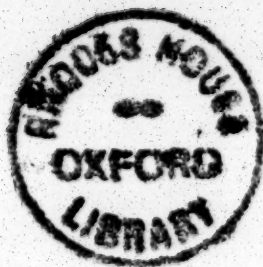
THE observations which I have ventured to commit to writing, are chiefly confined to the Extent, Climate, Soil, Stock, Manure, Articles of Cultivation; a description of the Maroons and their Town, and particularly of the uncultivated lands, &c. The mode of Culture adapted to each spot, is left for the completion of others more immediately concerned; and with great diffidence for, and respect to the opinions of those who must better understand the subject, some hints for general Improvement will be found interspersed, which, with humility, are submitted to the candid attention of the Board; as well as those interested in promoting the Improvement of the Agriculture of this Parish, and the welfare and happiness of its Inhabitants and of the Island in general.

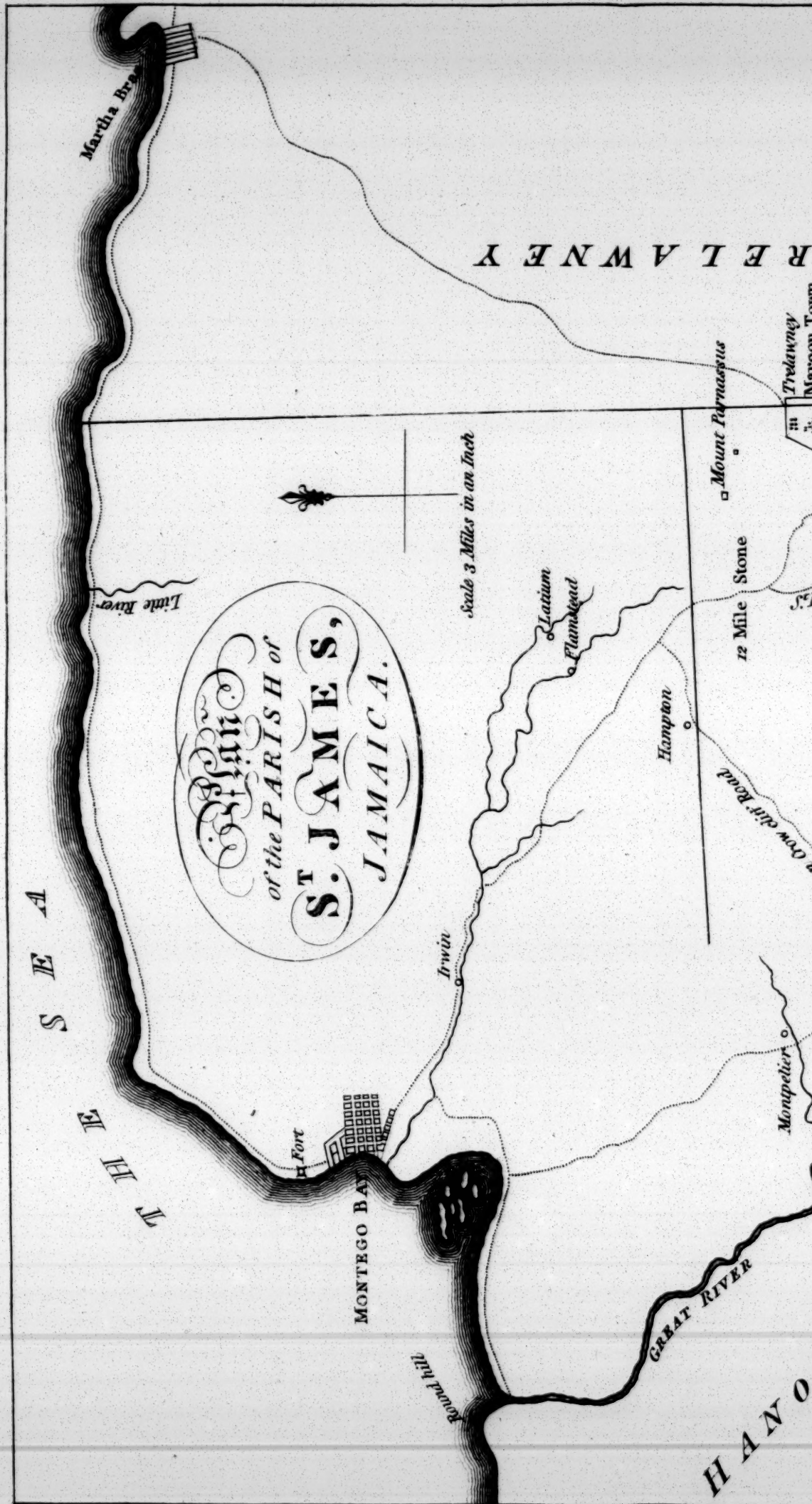
It may appear extraordinary to those at all acquainted with the laborious duties required in the profession of a Land Surveyor in the Island of Jamaica, that I should find time and opportunity to become acquainted with the nature of the subject I have thus attempted; but, I have in palliation of my temerity to add, that in early life I had obtained some knowledge in Agricultural Affairs, having had the advantage of being placed under the tuition of one of the most celebrated Farmers in the North of England; Mr. George Culley, of Fenton in Northumberland. Yet I must confess, that as I have not been accustomed to *method*, in writing for publication, and being without my plans and observations made on the spot, I have only ventured, during a short space, to represent such matter as has from experience occurred

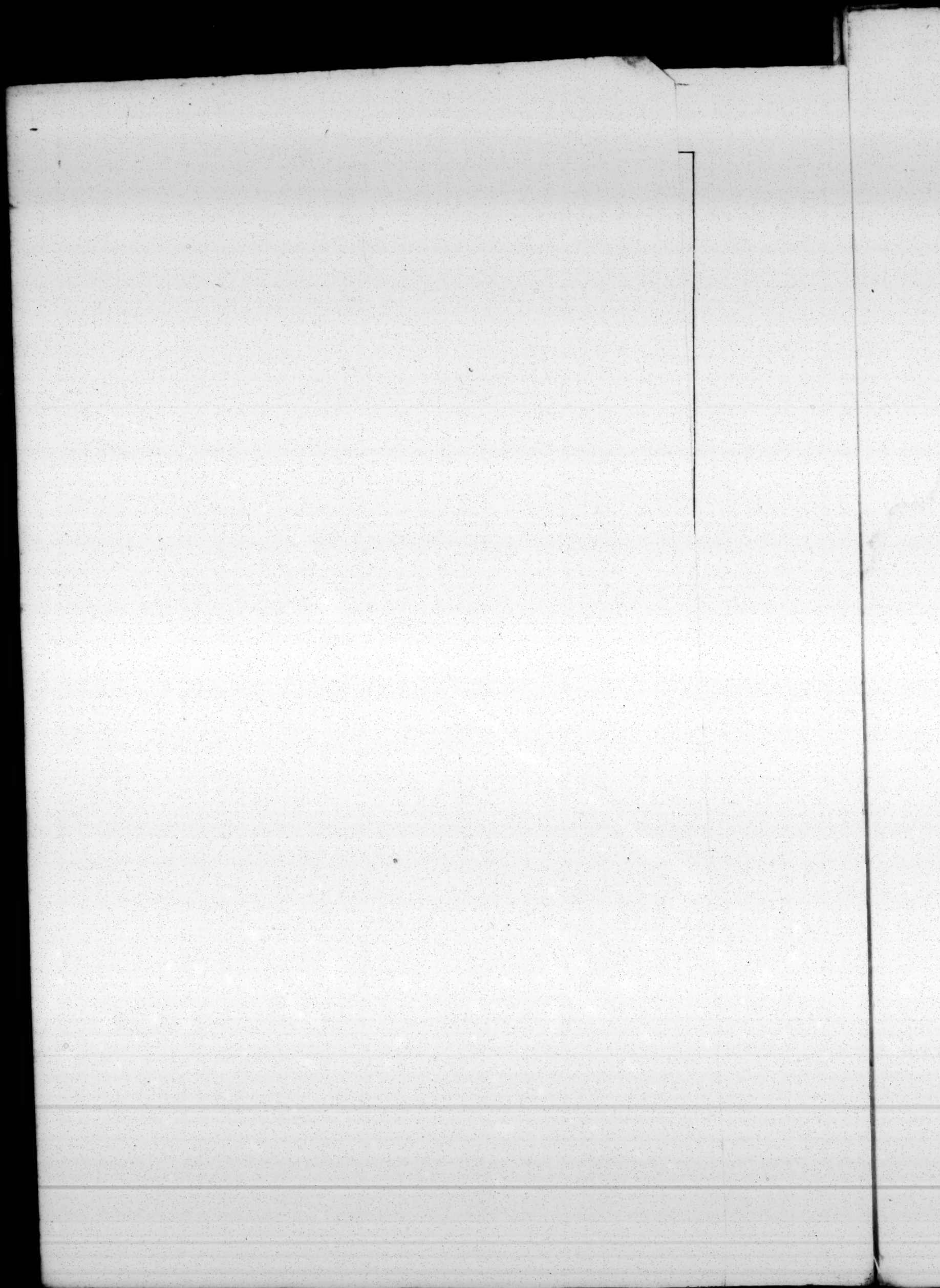
occurred during the exercise of my profession; and obtained by my being in the habit of making observations on the practice of others, during continual excursions throughout this Parish in particular. Having also frequently penetrated into the recesses of that part, which has been the seat of the Maroon war, it may be necessary for me to represent many places of security the Maroons have there, which, being unknown, but to myself, may be useful, in order to prevent, or exclude those turbulent persons, again producing such unfortunate calamities.

If the following can contribute in the smallest degree, to the welfare and prosperity of the Island at large, I take the liberty of saying my wishes will be highly gratified; or should the effort itself, or the slightest hint of improvement suggested in it, tend only to bring forward and promote an enquiry from others, in support of so useful a plan.

I beg further to observe, that I have for some years been compiling a plan of the whole Parish, from actual surveys, which I would offer to accompany this undertaking whenever it is completed; and which as the situation of the back lands is so little known even to residents in this Parish, would greatly enhance the object of these intended improvements.







EXTENT.

THE Parish of St. James is bounded on the north by the Sea, about 22 miles; west by the Parishes of Hanover and Westmoreland, from which it is divided by Great River; south, on the Parish of St. Elizabeth, and east on Trelawney Parish. Within this space is contained about 142,700 acres measured horizontally. But on summing up the contents of the lands in cultivation separately as well as each separate parcel of the uncultivated lands, the Parish will be found to contain much more, owing to the continual variation of the surface, and may be computed at about 20th part more.

CLIMATE.

The air of this Parish is justly esteemed healthy; particularly so on the mountain lands, where its purity is delightful. This is sensibly perceived by those who approach the mountains from the sea; whilst those who have been for some time accustomed to the mountain air, feel uneasy sensations of heat when at the sea. The thermometer in general varying 30 degrees between the mountains and shore. As it operates on the health of the inhabitants, it is very perceptible; the complexions of the mountaineers being more hale and florid, than those of the inhabitants of Montego-bay—Sickness is extremely rare in the more mountaineous parts of this Parish; and in some situations endemic disease is seldom known. The late malignant disorder, being confined almost wholly to new comers, and particularly soldiers, it is much to be regretted that no place has yet been established inland for the reception of troops, and their families. But considering this subject of so much importance, and as

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a matter which has been often projected, I leave to more able men, who have long foreseen the want of, and no doubt will shortly carry into execution, the building of a barrack, in a proper and central situation inland; and the purchasing a tract of land for this desirable purpose.

I shall venture to give my opinion as to situation, in the conclusion, when I give an account of the lands uncultivated.

SOIL:

The soil which forms the chief part of the mountain estates, is strong and deep, composed of clay and loam; the estates I allude to may be said to be Virgin Valley, Somerton, Windsor, Industry, Leyden, Guilsbro', Amity Hall, Newmanhall Sunderland, Crooked-Spring, Flamstead, Latium, Williamsfield, Potosi, Haddington, Hampton, Spring Mount, John's-hall, and Worcester: on these estates appears to be a fertile and durable soil. On many very steep hills, this soil continues equally good up to the tops of those hills; and from its solid texture seems also to resist in a great measure, the effects of being impoverished or washed away by heavy rains. Therefore most of this surface, altho' it extends over numberless hills and often very steep, yet those hills continue to yield liberally, whenever they undergo the usual mode of culture for sugar canes. This soil requires to be dug up and replanted in general once in four years, and may therefore be deemed a soil attended with most labour and expence in its culture, but at the same time of real durability. The more sandy, gravelly or rocky soils in this Parish in canes, is composed of a black shelly mould from 6 to 18 inches deep; upon a white marl or clay, in many spots very productive, particularly where the surface is rocky with a sufficient depth of soil, it being found that a flint rocky surface invariably preserves the lighter moulds from the sun, and may be said to promote the two first principles of vegetation; heat and moisture. On the contrary after heavy rains on clay soils,
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the cane root from being chilled, becomes often slow in its growth, but whenever a rocky surface prevails, the refraction of those stones or rocks, invigorates the growth, the moisture is retained, and in a continuance of dry weather this land does not suffer from draught so much as clay lands do. The canes produced from rocky soils is far superior in richness of juice to those on clay soils.—There is a large proportion of soil in this Parish, composed of hard gravel and flint stones, intermixed with little mould; either upon chalky marl, or solid rock, this is the soil allotted for guinea grass. The other remarkable soils, which the back part of the Parish abounds with, shall be mentioned when I represent the uncultivated lands.

ESTATES AND SETTLEMENTS.

THERE are now I think 76 sugar estates in this parish; the number of settlements and houses, I cannot tell with certainty; but that settlements have encreased in a greater proportion, within these two years past.

The welfare of the island depends so much on the encrease of settlers, it is hoped shortly they will no longer be disturbed by the visits of Maroon negroes, who have ever been a pest to them; yet while the Maroons are known to remain in the woods an enemy, sure it is until the danger be removed, all attempts at improvements will cease, much distress and loss will prevail; no settler daring to risk himself and negroes where woods abound; and what is certain, that all those deserted settlements will turn out to provide subsistence for the Maroons, who being driven from their town will live entirely on plundering the back settlements.*

* I am happy to learn since the above was written, that by the gallantry and good conduct of the gentlemen and people of colour of the island, the Maroons have been rendered incapable of giving the back settlers further disturbance. A circumstance which must conduce very highly to the advantage of those possessing property in the interior part of this parish.

CANES.

IT is not for me to say any thing of the culture of this important article, the mode of preparing the land, and the planting of canes, I hope will be fully explained by those who have it in their power individually to contribute to this useful information. The improvements within these few years, have been very great, and as local improvements frequently occur, it would be desirable that every one who can add such remarks as have come within his knowledge, will communicate them to paper, which certainly would be attended with public utility. I beg leave here to offer a conjecture of my own, and would ask, what might be acquired towards the improvement of the cane plant, by selecting out the best species of canes? For it is obvious that there are many variations in this p'ant, and probably also in the quality of its juice. There certainly are canes to be found more excellent than others, among those promiscuously planted; if so, would it not be proper to nurse them into a stock for general culture. It assuredly is perceptible, that in the vegetable creation, even more so than in animals, there is a constant inclination to degenerate.

The practice lately begun to supply the vacant spaces in cane-pieces, (where the plants have failed from various causes) by replanting a part of an old stock or root, instead of the cane itself, is an excellent plan, by which means the part supplied grows up with the crop. Formerly much labour used to be thrown away, on account of the *old stoles* overtopping the *cane supplies*, before the latter had time to vegetate, and keep pace with the former. As this is universally a necessary practice, an improvement occurs to me, which I beg leave to mention with deference to the experienced planter. I have observed in rooting up old stocks, for the purpose of supplies, that the common hoe is a very improper implement; the roots being fast bound in a strong surface, or otherwise,

otherwise, require so many heavy blows to be extricated, that in general it is beaten so much, as must destroy the roots, bruise the sprouts, and the earth which ought to be carefully preserved and accompanied with the plant, is entirely shook off. From the unskilfulness of this mode, I have often seen instances where those supplies have failed, even in tolerable seasons. The consequence is a failure in the expected crop, and much improvident labour bestowed. Therefore, as transplanting, in the gardener's opinion, is always a nice and careful operation, the use of a spade of proper shape and strength, would best answer the end, and be practised with more speed. Suppose the spade round pointed, rather concave, with a stout wooden handle; inclining to this shape, (see B) used with the foot in cutting round the stock, and the handle acting as the lever, will raise the piece out with gentle exertion. The same spade might be actively used in preparing the holes to receive the plants.

It is worthy of remark, and appears singular, when one considers that the common spade is never used in any of the various kinds of labour on an estate in Jamaica. The same hoe, which is used for cleaning the surface, or digging cane holes, also performs every other operation, for which the spade is so much better adapted; the hoe is used in digging water courses, ditches, trenches; and in a most laborious and tedious manner, is used in raising earth for fences, &c. If on every estate, a few of the more sensible negroes were wholly employed in handling and using the spade, their labour, for various purposes, would be attended with treble advantages. The body is not so soon harrassed with the spade, and can be made to do much more labour, both with ease and speed, than the hoe can possibly do with the whole effort of the arms, and the most laborious action of the body.

As an improvement, I do not recollect any thing more required, than the introduction, and proper use of the spade.

GUINEA GRASS.

THIS valuable grass, is justly one of the principal supports attending the island in general ; every estate has its proportion, and without this useful herbage, would be very inferior in point of value to what they are now arrived to. Besides its preference to all other foods for fattening stock, when eat on the land, it is cut at all times for the use of the folds and stables, and forms the chief dependance for procuring dung. The quickness and strength of its growth is such, as to enable its being cut at the height of three or four feet every two months, during hot and rainy seasons. Whether or no this grass would answer for a single crop to the farmer in Great Britain, experiment may be made to know. It is cultured by slips planted at about three feet asunder, in the months of June, July and August ; and ripens its seed in October, which after shedding, the plants or clumps are cut down, thrown on the ground, and being burnt off, a new crop immediately begins to shoot up from the seed, as well as from the original plants, and remains ever after established.

It is found not to answer so well on cold or clay lands, as on gravelly or light soils: thrives well if not best on a rocky surface ; and indeed on lands so hard and otherwise barren, as are not fit for any other article of produce.

COFFEE.

THERE are only as yet two coffee plantations of any note in this parish (Mr. Vaughan's and Mr. Trought's) both situated at the extremity of the back settlements, about seventeen miles from the sea ; and have a general good appearance, as the climate and soil surpass those of the plantations on lower or warmer situations. The berry is accordingly found, highly superior in quality, beauty and plumpness, to the produce of estates near the sea. The mode of culture and management

nagement of coffee, is so well known, and the practice so easily acquired, it cannot be useful here to mention it.

It is necessary for me to observe, that the great bulk of uncultivated lands in this parish, laying centrically here, no doubt every settler will meet with success in coffee planting. The grand road from St. James's parish to that of St. Elizabeth, leads through this extensive district, on which the House of Assembly has granted an additional sum, besides the annual parochial allotment, for the purpose of making it complete for carriages; which will shortly render these lands very desirable for settlers. All the branches of the roads to settlements are rendered easy from this, and probably a few years will produce great increase in the value of these lands as well as of exports.

I shall beg to point out what seems to me an error, which makes so many observe that coffee does not reward the planter. Many small settlers overplant in quantity, with an idea that every acre planted is valued at so much; and some with the hopes of disposing of their settlements thus begun, are for a time disappointed; the consequence is, that the necessary attention is neglected, for other concerns, and the quantity produced or manufactured will not pay the expence of planting, &c.—There are many extensive tracts of land well adapted for coffee through the uncultivated parts of this parish; and which, with proper management, are capable of producing excellent crops, and that of highly superior flavoured coffee. Much improvement is wanting in pruning, cleaning, and observing to supply the trees in time; and to plant no more than what can be brought to perfection.

GINGER.

THERE are not any regular plantations of ginger in this parish. It is said by some who have made a trial of it, (as of coffee) that it does not answer. Although for my part, I am convinced that there is an equal proportion of soil as well adapted

adapted for its growth, as for any other article of produce, throughout the uncultivated lands in this parish.

It is an article which will, at the present price, give ample returns to the industrious settler, being very productive, and comparatively attended with trifling expence. The success of which depends upon keeping the crop very clean, and not overplanting. Ginger obtains its present distinction by the different modes of cure only; that called *black* ginger sells at an inferior price to *white* ginger; yet as the former requires less labour, it is said to yield the most profit. The *black* is cured by means of boiling water; the white, in addition, has the outward substance scraped off, which, by reason of the unevenness of the root, becomes tedious.

From 800lb. to 1000lb. may be had from an acre. One acre properly planted, cleaned, and attended to, will produce more, and the land afterwards be fitter for other purposes, than four acres under the present rough mode of culture. I have heard that the French are sensible of this difference; and hence the high price and excellence of this root, under their management. Much of the ginger reaped in Jamaica is taken up in a wild uncultivated state, even green and unripe, and does not retain that solid substance or appearance of the French ginger.

COTTON.

THERE is very little soil in this parish suitable for a regular plantation of cotton. The little that is here produced, is no more than what is planted promiscuously along with other articles of culture.

The best crops are produced near the sea, and a rocky or gravelly soil is perhaps the best for it. It does not seem to thrive on the back lands.

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Horses.—The best horses used here are bred in the parishes of St. Ann's and St. Elizabeth's. A great part of the horses in general use are imported from Cuba; these Spanish horses are of a very inferior breed and small, yet some of them are hardy, and endure constant riding. The value of a creole horse is from £.50 to £.80; the value of these from Cuba seldom above £.20.

Mules.—The greatest part of the mules for supplying the estates in this parish are also imported from Cuba; but the mules bred in the island are the best, and endure most labour. The value of a creole mule being from £.30 to £.35; those from Cuba £.20 to £.25.

The number of horses and mules imported annually from Cuba at Montego Bay, may be averaged at 300 head, of which, 250 are mules.

Cattle.—The different kinds of cattle (or steers) used for labour, are a species of the long-horned, of various colours, middle-sized, and very hardy. A larger breed propagated from the importation of bulls from Great Britain; and an inferior sort which are imported from Cuba, called Spanish cattle. The first excels in the draught; the larger breed are not so hardy for constant labour, but answer in the end best for the grazier. The best of the Spanish cattle are durable, and also supply the draught, but the greater part of them, being very small, are fattened for the table. The value of working steers may be averaged at £.20 a head. The number of cattle annually imported from Cuba at Montego Bay is about 800 to 1200 head.

There may be wanting an improvement in the breed to answer the purpose for the grazier, which can only be established by gentlemen who have it in their power to import an improved sort, and bestow attention to the breed.

MANURE.

The value of manure to the sugar plantation, and the dependance so certain from its application, are objects of real notice, and probably remain for much improvement. First, the method of collecting and the materials; secondly, the proper situation of the dung-heap and the preservation of its juices; and thirdly, the mode of applying manure. Every estate endeavours to encrease the quantity of its manure, which is chiefly collected from the folds and the cleaning of the mill-yard, mixed with a proportion of earth. Much labour is here expended, and in the first instance properly bestowed; but the object for improvement is to have the dung-heap situated so as to secure the continual drainings from it, which heavy rains occasion; for as situated and managed at present, before the heap comes to maturity its vegetative quality is washed out, and lost to the estate.

Suppose the ground were paved and inclining to the center; along which, let a gutter be laid, inclining towards the end; this would collect and discharge the liquor from the dung into a small bason or tank; it might then be conveyed, and used very profitably, and with little trouble, either along the rows of plant canes or elsewhere, or thrown upon a compost of earth, &c. at hand for this purpose. Other objects ought to be, to avoid laying it down in heaps exposed to the Sun for any time, after being carted out, and to have it applied before its moisture is evaporated. These projected improvements must appear obvious to every one to whom the value of manure and the expence attending it is known, and therefore a matter worthy of regard. Whatever the manure may have lost of its real virtues before applied, becomes a loss of the first expence in labour, and also of the advantage which would have been gained by its proper application.

The MAROONS and MAROON TOWNS in this Parish.

The Maroon Negroes originated from a rebellious set of negroes upwards of 100 years ago, who had retired to the woods, and it was found in those days totally impracticable to pursue them, much less find out their places of retreat. It was not until about the year 1738 that they became formidable, when the gallant Colonel Guthry at length, on an expedition about this time, came up with the greatest collection of them in this parish; and after pursuing them beyond their present town, and driving them into fastnesses amongst the tremendous mountains situate here, was the means of concluding a peace, on terms securing in part their independency, and making them, at the same time, useful in a certain degree to the island.

The House of Assembly determined, under certain restrictions, to consider them as free subjects. They had an allotment of 1,500 acres of land, and were to co-operate in the defence of the island, and use their endeavours to take up runaway negroes. They chose their own officers, and each effective man was provided with a musket, &c.

They have not encreased much during several years past. Their present number, including children, boys and girls, and old women, is about 650; I should conjecture of this number about one third are capable of bearing arms.

The genuine character of the Maroons being described, will in some measure point out their great detriment to the island ever since. In some instances, they have been useful in checking runaway negroes; but having no authority or regulation amongst themselves, and being destitute of all regularity of conduct in their occupations or pursuits, are no better than a rude banditti of villains. Their progenitors were of the Coromantin Country, whose language and customs they still keep up. They are passionate and revengeful, are tall and well made, lead an idle and dissipated life; it

being the custom of that country to make the women perform the labour of planting, &c. and carrying burthens, while the men meditate upon hunting or fighting. They are astonishingly addicted to drinking spirits, and would live always in a state of intoxication if they had the means. They boast much of their exploits; but their actions are only the effects of a momentary enthusiasm: hence they are cowardly to a great degree, and it is found they never openly face an enemy, even much weaker than themselves. They never apply themselves to the cultivation of any produce for sale, nor would their indolence ever suffer them to think of being employed by white people in the culture of the earth; but they will engage sometimes in parties, to fall and clear wood land by the acre, which they will often do at an inconsiderable price; in that case they are induced jointly to exert their strength, with the hopes of making it worth their while, and having immediate payment on the work being completed. Herein sometimes they will for a short time use violent exertions, but having no kind of deliberation or command one with another, there is no dependence on their engagements. On any disagreement amongst themselves, or on the slightest occasion, if they think they have not made a good bargain, will frequently desist; when it is found impossible to content them. Should their own measures not be complied with, and the person who employed them be unacquainted with their villainy, they will threaten him into a compliance with their terms if possible; will hold out, and return in formidable parties; using the most frantic and passionate gestures, in order to produce a belief that it is in their power to obtain private revenge. This daring impudence forms a chief part of their conversation; and in recounting their journies and actions when at home, produces great mirth and happiness in them. They have no regularity as to time, most part of which is spent in excursions in the woods, or travelling about from one parish to another; their provision

sion grounds, are mostly planted and reaped by the women and children. So unsteadily are they disposed, and so worthless are the men, that they will travel long journies into different parishes to purchase the article of green tobacco, which is bought partly from industrious slaves; will often be absent some weeks before they return to their town; this tobacco they make into rolls, and retail by travelling again with it chiefly down to Westmorland (the South side of the island). Comparing the time they consume with the profit they receive, they do not perhaps make sixpence a day. It would seem as if they had other motives to account for this vagrant turn; no doubt, the hopes of plunder, and a prospect of meeting on their road any runaway negroes. In these marches the women carry mostly the burthen, and each man has a musquet, which he carries for the purpose of shooting pigeons. Such is their restless disposition, that they cannot prevail amongst themselves to pursue the proper means of being provided with the necessaries of life, while they render themselves even despicable, and often wretched in the eyes of industrious slaves.

The Maroon Town in this parish, known by the name of *Trelawney-Town*, is composed of two separate parts, called the Old and the New Town, about a mile asunder. There was formerly a place near this called *Furry's-Town*, but there has not been any remains of it these forty years, although it is still represented in maps of the island; it had its name from a Maroon, who was one of the ringleaders in a former rebellion.

The present towns are situated upon the upper part of a high mountain, composed of various inequalities, or lesser mountains, upon which is a convenient space of level land, which seems by Nature formed for the conveniency of building, as well as a place of uncommon safety. This mountain is ascended up to the towns by several winding paths, but there is only one path which may be said to be barely
ridable

ridable, and that only safe in dry seasons. Further back the towns are surrounded by vast piles of still higher rocky mountains; amongst these they have many recesses and provision grounds, the glades between the mountains being a very rich soil, and secured from winds. I found very extensive provision grounds when cutting through the woods far beyond their lines. I dare say they have cleared not less than 40 or 50 acres on the two runs of Wm. and C. Curtis. I discovered various provision grounds on the runs of Whitaker and Baker, and on the runs of Erskine and Goodin.

It is surprizing how they injure themselves by their restless disposition; without judgment or deliberation, as soon as the thought occurs to them, a party will set out into the woods, on various projects, perhaps with hopes of coming up with wild hogs, or in search of the alligator-bark tree, which is used to make their bags or nets for carrying provender, &c. if by chance they discover a spot of land which pleases them, the idea of making a provision ground of it, is at once determined on. The only difficulty is to know the distance and nearest way to procure a path to the town; which is done on their return, by following the windings between these lofty mountains. Their motive for making those fresh provision grounds proceeds from indolence; that as soon as planted, it requires no labour to clean; this new land not being productive of weeds for two or three years, and is seldom visited but to inspect when the provisions are ripe. The land on their own limits (1500 acres) is as good, and in general much better than any land in that neighbourhood; but, with their ruined ideas, they have proceeded over most parts of it, but so soon as each ground became foul, they clear or fall timber on a new space, rather than clean an *old ground*, as they call it.

I will however venture to affirm, that they have exceeded in these depredations, and added to their natural discontented and insolent conduct, for want of a regular government,
and

and good precepts in their *Superintendent*. Being myself personally acquainted with most of them in this town, I know that they have an inclination to render themselves subservient to their *Superintendent*; and, notwithstanding they will at all times endeavour to impose on him, yet, at the same time, will regard him so far as they find him possessed of spirit and resolution to check their insolence, as also advise them in their conduct. Besides these necessary qualifications, it would be an *important improvement*, if the *Superintendent* was possessed also of *knowledge in agriculture*; by his example and success, they would soon discover an inclination for planting. Whereas the present purposes of the *Superintendent* does little more than provide the Maroons with passports whenever they leave the town to go out on travelling parties.

Whatever has been the cause of their late daring conduct, they could have no other inducement to expect success from, than confiding in the security of bush-fighting; nor is there any great reason to dread that any negroes would be induced to join and follow their desperate example. Yet considering that their numbers are few, very extensive mischief may be perpetrated by this dastardly enemy. Their suppression, or atonement, becomes speedily necessary, as this part of the country is just on the eve of great improvement in new settlements, which for the present must now be abandoned.

Of the UNCULTIVATED LANDS.

I have represented, in the annexed sketch of this parish, the extensive tract of uncultivated lands, which deserves very attentive enquiry. Many years ago it was foreseen by every body the want of a road to lead through these lands, as well as to obtain an intercourse between the north and south sides of this part of the island. This object was begun about 20 years ago, when the late Mr. Whittaker, land-surveyor, in a most indefatigable manner cut a track through this valuable

able part of the country ; since which this road has been progressively improving, although the annual sum expended by the parish only rendered it a road for horses ; it has within these few years past at length claimed the attention of the legislature of the island ; and through the proper assiduity of men acquainted with so valuable an acquisition, this road has received due notice, and liberal supplies have been obtained to render it complete for carriages. Many parts of these lands are very mountainous and rocky, and some of the mountains steep and barren ; but in the intermediate spaces, and a considerable part of these hills, is a good soil, well adapted to the cultivation of every article of produce. In many places, I can speak from experience, are vast tracts of rich soil, perfectly answerable for coffee and ginger in particular ; and that great success would attend the cultivation of these articles, carried to any extent, under proper management.

From the difference of climate on these higher lands, it is not to be doubted that the soil and situation would be found to answer in the culture of various articles, hitherto untried. I must confess it is a matter of surprize, and as an object which demands particular notice, that the value of these lands hath not encreased long before this ; the present value of these uncultivated lands not being more than from £.2 to £.5 an acre ; whilst the more rocky and barren lands nearer the sea, and found to answer for guinea grass, have within ten years past advanced in the purchase from £.5 to £.30 an acre. At this period, however, most of the sugar estates, having appropriated all their plantable land (exclusive of canes) in guinea grass, provisions and negro grounds, besides having now little or no timber left, will shortly be under the necessity of being supplied from the back lands.

It is certain, when the principal road which leads through this district is completed for carriages, the only obstacle in the settlement, as well as sale of these lands, will be removed

moved. There has hitherto been few settlers who wish to retire so far back, and depend upon the cultivation of any particular produce; and of those who do, having most of them other concerns, seek for no more than provision grounds, and a home for themselves and negroes: so that, if they make a trial of any article which might answer for exportation, it is seldom regarded either with attention or judgment; other matters, which appear to promise more immediate gain, (such as their professions) being more earnestly attended to. Besides many, with a good desire to settle, from want of skill in agriculture, or attention, lose much time and labour in their attempts at planting.

I could however point out others, who have liberally begun with a proper spirit of example on their settlements in those interior lands; but I beg for the present to decline saying any thing of their real individual merits, as well as knowledge in the culture of the earth; I hope their success will induce others to partake of the hidden treasures which those extensive lands abound with, and lead on to awaken a proper emulation in the science of planting amongst the mountain settlers.

An increase of settlers is one great object attending the prosperity of the island; towards that it is desirably to be wished, that every one who undertakes a settlement on these lands, should acquire a proper knowledge of the soil, and whatever article of produce they go upon, to obtain the mode of bringing it to perfection: with this view, from the means now adopted, there is good reason to hope, when the remarks and opinions of others come to be combined, a regular system of agricultural information may be framed, so as to insure success to the industrious mountain settler.

As I have before observed, it is a just remark, that the smaller settlers (having perhaps other professions) should confine themselves to plant no more than they can properly attend to, and bring to perfection, which is recommended in preference to planting at random, an over quantity: in this

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latter respect in small settlements, much improvident labour is generally expended.

It is surprising to know the produce of one acre of land, properly cultivated, kept perfectly clean and minutely attended to, until the article be ripe; let it be although apparently clean, gone over for the purpose of adding a portion of soil to the root, and in every respect as a judicious gardener would do, who expects a crop brought to perfection. In Jamaica it is astonishing how prolific vegetation is where the soil is attended to and gone over in the slightest manner; and by a continuance of this attention much labour will be saved in the end, observing after the first cleaning, to keep the crop from getting foul afterwards, by an early second cleaning; a circumstance which would afterwards require a light expence, until the article was brought to maturity. It will appear to the experience of many, that vast expence of labour is lost through over-planting, and through the attempts to clean this over quantity, too often occasions a great disproportion in the returns of the crop.

It is hardly possible to particularize the various soils throughout the uncultivated lands in this Parish, yet I venture to affirm that soil will more or less be found fit for every article of produce. There are extensive tracts of deep red mould, in general rocky, but uncommonly rich; as also the black shelly mould with loose rocks. There are no doubt very barren mountains, yet I am well convinced soil may be met with on *every run*, which would happily reward the skilful and industrious.

That there wants a better knowledge of those lands, as well as a regular plan and method of planting is certain; to forward this design, it is hoped there will be no want of contribution in knowledge from the liberal minds of men, ever ready to promote the welfare of the island. As a subject of so much importance is worthy of serious investigation, a system founded on experience must be attended with the happiest effects.

INLAND

INLAND SITUATION FOR TROOPS.

This grand object has lately been discussed in meetings held for the purpose in this Parish; and by the united opinions of many respectable gentlemen, it was approved of and determined upon, to erect the necessary buildings at the *old barracks*, situated at the side of Great River, near Montpelier; being 12 miles from Montego-bay*,

The temperature of the air in this neighbourhood renders it extremely healthy. After a judicious plan was formed, and an able architect engaged, the buildings were begun; but at present there has been some objection made (which I am not particularly informed of) that has occasioned a stop in the progress of the buildings. The chief obstacle which occurs against this situation, is that the crown having many years ago, at a time when the lands in this neighbourhood were considered of little value, granted under letters patent, the whole of these lands situate here, except *only 8 acres* which was reserved for the use of these *old barracks*. This makes an objection not likely now to be obviated, as the purchase of a sufficient quantity here would be attended with considerable expence, the surrounding land being of a superior quality. It can however never be supposed that the space of *8 acres*, will answer for the material purposes of raising vegetables and procuring provender, &c. and would only be little more than adequate for the buildings, yards and offices, &c. Other spots of this Parish, however, are equally healthy, and it is more than probable on being reviewed, will appear to have the preference in several circumstances; and will be attended with some important advantages, which the *old barracks* cannot be deemed capable of producing.

The *old barracks* no doubt commands the road to Westmoreland, but will never be found central for the protec-

* This situation as well as others, I have represented in the annexed rough draught of the parish.

tion of any great number of settlements, and perhaps in a less useful situation for the benefit of the island in general. For although the land in this part of the country is excellent, it is not likely to be appropriated for settlers, as it belongs in large proportions to a few proprietors, who no doubt, intend it to be occupied on a large scale, for the purpose of sugar estates, or large grass farms.

I beg therefore to remark, that any other *proper situation* within the part coloured green, would effectually furnish every requisite for this undertaking, and would besides be productive of many advantages, which I take the liberty to point out. First, I recommend the situation to be any where between the east line of this Parish, and the St. Elizabeth Road; but no where perhaps would answer better for every good purpose, as well as for the preservation of health, than the spot where the Maroon town now stands; this would be central between the parishes of Trelawney and St. James's, and being on the road which will hereafter be completed from thence to Martha Brae, and to be communicated with the St. Elizabeth road; the distance only about 14 miles. Then from the St. Elizabeth road, through Hampton Estate, to the old barracks by the Carrion-Crow-Cliff road, is, I conjecture, about 7 miles; it being little more than an hour's ride from Hampton to Seven-rivers, by the present incomplete road. Secondly, this advised spot overlooks the bulk of the settlements in St. James's, and would also be near those settled in the back part of Trelawney, as well as St. Elizabeth; being very nearly at equal distance from the two ports of Montego-bay and Martha-brae. The purchase of land, if required for any purpose whatever, would at this period be an object of less consideration.

Or, suppose the spot was fixed to be on the St. Elizabeth Road, any where approved of, between the 12 mile stone, and the extent of the south line of the parish; though not so desirable, would have the advantage of being nearer to St. Elizabeth, and have a command over Accompong Town.

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As a further inducement in favour of this latter situation, I beg to mention, that in the district of this road, are many runs* of land, which have long ago become escheatable, from the heirs of former patentees not having paid the quit rents; and indeed many runs have never been claimed or run out, so that on investigation, there might legally be obtained a considerable quantity for the purpose of being reinvested in the crown.

The many promising advantages, which are to be the result of an inland town or barracks, is left for others to enlarge upon. That it would alone insure the lives of thousands is not to be doubted.

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES OF PRODUCE.

Indigo. The cultivation of this article is now wholly given up in this parish, but is found growing wild in most parts, and appears to thrive well.

Whether the mountain lands are so proper for it as on lower and warmer situations, I am not able to say; but that, from the nature of the plant, and its dye being extracted from the leaves, would require a rich soil to promote a luxuriant vegetation, and also for the same purpose would require to be kept very clean.

I conceive it to be an object of uncommon profit, especially for small settlers to plant a portion of, on any particularly rich spots near rivers.

Cocoa or Chocolate.—This plant is very rare to be met with in this parish. A few scattered trees I have seen planted on the mountain lands, have every appearance that a cool and shady situation is best adapted for its culture, the tree as well as fruit being very luxuriant. But as soon as the pods became nearly ripe they were destroyed by rats. It is not at all likely to be attended with profit, especially to small settlers, as it remains about five years before it makes any return.

* 300 acres is computed to be a run.

Turmeric.—This root as well as its plant resembles in appearance the ginger plant. It has lately been introduced into this parish; I saw the produce of a small quantity reaped on the mountain lands, (at Cold-Spring) which appeared to have come to great perfection.

Whatever may be the present value of its dye, or the demand for it, I am unacquainted with; but I can affirm, that that it will thrive on the back lands.

Indian Arrow Root.—This is the root of a plant of the flag or iris kind, the botanical name of which is *maranta arundinacea*; nor do I remember ever to have met with any account of the many, most excellent, indeed most invaluable qualities with which it abounds. At a time like the present, when many substitutes are required for starch and hair powder, it would prove the most complete substitute for these necessary articles. In fact, were its use and value once known, not one grain of wheat, where this root could be procured, would ever be used for starch.

From the hardiness of the plant, I have little doubt that it might be grown in all parts of Great Britain; and if so, I have not the least doubt would prove an object of great national importance.

This root is at present planted for the purpose of furnishing the article of starch and hair powder. The starch is procured by means of grating the root, or beating it to pulp, which, after being immersed in water, and filtered from its gross parts, is suffered to subside, which it will do in a few minutes; the water is poured off, and the substance adheres to the bottom of the vessel, which is dried in the Sun, and becomes easily reducible into powder; or rather, if the expression may be used, into flour of such extraordinary whiteness, and of as fine a quality as can possibly be conceived or produced from the finest farinaceous grain. It is often used when boiled into pap as a restorative; as such, or as food, it certainly is far superior to *sago*, and perhaps more suited to the climate. In fluxes its use is esteemed a beneficial remedy;

dy ; and in extreme relaxed habits after fevers, vomitings purgings, or in cases to guard the stomach and bowels against the effects of poison, it becomes a salutary medicine.

As a nutritive food it is excellent, and is rendered very palatable and pleasant by the addition of a little wine and sugar. Perhaps it is used but too seldom ; it is probable it might be substituted (from its cooling nature) as a regular meal to new comers, as a happy means for the preservation of their health. It is a vegetable plant, and the culture of it very easy. The produce from any given space, exceeds in weight and quantity most other roots ; and from its preference to colder situations, makes me more incline to think that it would thrive well in Great Britain. The roots are from 6 to 10 inches long, about an inch and a half thick, with sharp point which darts straight downwards, and penetrates the stiffest soils ; and as if the Sun was its enemy, where it meets with a stone or root of a tree, it generally grows horizontally under them as it were to be cool and sheltered from the heat ; and in this situation the root is increased in size.

Grapes.—The few vines growing in this parish, are only in gardens, which do not thrive, or the fruit ever come to any degree of perfection ; the grapes being small and not very sweet. But this I attribute to the extreme heat of the Sun in lower situations, and its great influence, especially on the lighter moulds in gardens where grape vines are planted ; as also from little or no attention given to the pruning of the vines or fruit. There is great probability that many parts of the mountains would be found answerable for bringing the culture of grapes to perfection. Many situations on the more loose rocky mountains possessing a richness of soil and great choice of exposure, it would be worth while to make a trial.

The climate on these mountains, and the certain dependence on fine seasons, seem to indicate that it would answer for grapes. It would not be difficult to obtain the mode of planting, &c. from any person who had been conversant in the culture of the grape vine in Madeira.

Cinamon.

Cinamon.—This spice, with very little care, will soon become plentiful in Jamaica. There are many plants already in this parish; but many I have seen having been planted in the light moulds of gardens, had become parched up by the heat of the Sun; whilst some I have particularly noticed at the penn of William Hudson, Esq. thrive extremely well, upon a stiff clayey loam intermixed with gravel, in a colder climate. There is not the smallest doubt of it's being propagated in the mountains of this parish to as great perfection, and brought to as perfect maturity as in any other part of the world. The flavour of that which grew at Mr. Hudson's was excellent. The method of extricating the bark, and the curing of it, I have no knowledge of, but suppose these operations attended with little labour.

Bread Fruit—Since the introduction of this beautiful and useful tree, it has been clearly proved that it thrives luxuriantly in all situations; yet the coolness of the mountains appears to maintain a preference. The trees are now beginning to yield fruit; of its excellency as a substantial and agreeable food, the most favourable accounts have been given. There is some doubt, from its extraordinary foliage and size of the fruit, it will not withstand the effects of a hurricane.

But it is to be hoped, that as its wood is of a tough nature, it will not suffer in so great a degree as the plantain tree; having this advantage, that although the fruit and lesser branches may be blown off by heavy gales of wind, yet the trunk and larger branches will probably, immediately after, put forth a supply of fruit, which the plantain tree cannot do in less than eight or ten months. But the most striking superiority of the bread-fruit tree is, that it will grow in open pastures without that minute attention to cleaning, which is required to render the plantain tree, as well as all other articles of bread-kind, productive in Jamaica.

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